

## REMARKS

Claims 1-66 remain pending. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-38, 49-51 and 53-66 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Jayaraman (U.S. Patent No. 5,755,781). The Examiner asserts that the stent pattern shown in Figures 8 and 9 of the cited reference includes all of the limitations of the rejected claims. Applicant respectfully traverses. The present invention is unequivocally calls for the proximal and distal sections to have a strut pattern than is denser than the strut pattern of the central section. The only discernable change in strut pattern density in the stent shown in FIGS. 8 and 9 corresponds to elements 61 and 71, and as such those elements would define the central section. Since such “connectors” 61 and 71, as they are described in the reference, only serve to longitudinally interconnect the proximal and distal sections, and are not interconnected to one another, it is respectfully submitted that they can not reasonably be characterized as defining a “ring” as is clearly called for in each and every independent claim. Anticipation is therefore clearly avoided.

Moreover, in view of the fact that a central section having a ring structure is capable of imparting desired performance characteristics to a stent that a central section having a longitudinal structure is not capable of (e.g. a longitudinal structure has no hoop strength), the stent of the present invention is more ideally suited to the task at hand, namely, supporting a vessel’s walls while promoting cell growth where needed (page 2, line 25 - page 3, line 3). It is respectfully submitted that obviousness is therefore also avoided.

Claims 39 and 40 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Jayaraman. In view of the non-obviousness of underlying independent claim 20 as was argued above, it is respectfully submitted that all claims depending therefrom similarly avoid obviousness.

Claims 41-48 and 52 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Jayaraman. In view of the non-obviousness of underlying independent claims 20 and 49

as was argued above, it is respectfully submitted that all claims depending therefrom similarly avoid obviousness.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectively urged that all of the present claims of the application are patentable and in a condition for allowance. The undersigned attorney can be reached at (310) 824-5555 to facilitate prosecution of this application, if necessary.

In light of the above amendments and remarks, applicant earnestly believes the application to now be in condition for allowance and respectfully requests that it be passed to issue.

Respectfully submitted,

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